

# Fort Bend County Public Transportation Department

## Passenger Guidelines

*A Citizen's Guide for Accessing Services and Operating  
Policies and Procedures*



**APPROVED BY FORT BEND COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT**

*July 12, 2016*

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**PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Passenger Guidelines is to provide our passengers a guide for accessing services and information on operating policies and procedures. Translation of these policies into different languages will be accommodated as soon as possible after a request for such translation is made. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), individuals with vision impairments can request an audio tape of these guidelines and/or copies of the guidelines printed in larger font. Individuals with hearing impairments can request information or services via our Text Telephone (TTY) or by using other interpretive services provided by State or Local agencies.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

The Fort Bend County Public Transportation Administrative Offices are located in Sugar Land, Texas. Deliveries and/or correspondence are received at the following address:

Fort Bend County  
Public Transportation Department  
12550 Emily Court, Suite 400  
Sugar Land, Texas 77478

The following telephone numbers can be used to contact Departmental staff, schedule a ride, obtain information about services and/or provide comments concerning services:

Toll Free: 866-751-TRIP (8747)  
Office Number: 281-633-RIDE (7433)  
TTY Administration Office: 281-494-7160  
Fax Number: 281-243-6710

Comments, questions or concerns should be directed to the following address:  
[Transit@fortbendcountytexas.gov](mailto:Transit@fortbendcountytexas.gov).

Information regarding our services is available on the Fort Bend County website at [www.FBCTransit.org](http://www.FBCTransit.org).

## HOURS OF OPERATIONS

The Fort Bend County Public Transportation **Administrative Office** is open Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. excluding County Holidays. The **Reservation Office** is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. excluding County Holidays.

Public Transportation Offices are **closed on County Holidays with the exception of special services**. County Holidays are posted on the County website and in vehicles.

## COUNTY HOLIDAYS

Fort Bend County observes the following holidays:

New Year's Day  
Birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.  
Good Friday  
Memorial Day  
Independence Day  
Labor Day Fort Bend County Fair Day  
Veterans Day  
Thanksgiving Holiday  
Christmas Holiday

Dates for each County Holiday are available on the County website at:  
<https://www.fortbendcountytexas.gov>

Operating hours for Demand Response services vary according to trip requests and/or grant funding. In most cases, first drop-offs are scheduled for 8:00 a.m. and last pick-ups are scheduled for 5:00 p.m. Variances to operating hours due to grant funding and/or special services will be published on the website, in vehicles and/or announced via public media outlets (radio, television, newspaper ads, etc.) when applicable.

Operating hours for Commuter, Park and Ride and Fixed Route services are provided according to published schedules. Services may begin as early as 4:30 a.m. and end as late as 9:00 p.m. Schedules for services are posted on the County website and are available in the Public Transportation Department Administrative Office. Passengers may request schedules be mailed to them by contacting the Public Transportation Department Administrative Office.

Special services, including events and/or charter services may also be provided during and after regular business hours. Information, including service type, service hours and fares will be posted on the County's website, in vehicles and/or announced via public media outlets (radio, television, newspaper ads, etc.), when applicable.

Fort Bend County may suspend and change all or parts of its transportation service during emergency events (weather, and other emergencies). Notification of change(s) will be made as soon as possible after the emergency occurrence via public media outlets, through the Fort Bend County Office of Emergency Management and any other sources deemed necessary and/or available during the event.

Days and hours of operation may change periodically for all services. Information concerning these changes will be posted to the County's website, in vehicles and/ or announced via public media outlets (radio, television, newspaper ads, etc.) when applicable.

## **SERVICE AREA**

For Demand/Response and para-transit services, the service area is limited to Fort Bend County. Trips will be provided within Fort Bend County and/or to destinations in adjoining counties within one (1) mile of the Fort Bend County line.

For commuter services, fixed route or point deviation services, the service area will be detailed in the route schedule. These services will be limited to routes within Fort Bend County and/or routes beginning in Fort Bend County and traveling into selected business districts in Harris County.

In certain circumstances, funding may become available to provide services into other areas or counties. Information concerning these changes will be posted to the County's website, in vehicles and/or announced via public media outlets (radio, television, newspaper ads, etc.) when applicable.

## **SERVICE TYPES**

### **Demand/Response**

Shared ride bus service requiring advance reservations. Passengers share their ride with other passengers. Buses serve different locations and passengers each day dependent upon the locations requested by passengers.

### **Commuter/Park and Ride**

Shared ride bus service which operates on a set schedule from and to set parking lot locations with scheduled drop-offs and pick-ups within the business district. Designed primarily to accommodate employment trips and also open for general trip purposes.

### **Point Deviation Route**

Buses traveling along the same road(s) each day with timed stops at designated

locations. With pre-arranged approval, buses can deviate short distances from a route to pick-up and drop-off customers and/ or to accommodate pick-ups and drop-offs at high demand locations.

### **Fixed Route**

Buses traveling along the same road(s) each day with timed stops at designated locations.

### **Complementary Para-Transit**

This bus service operates as a requirement of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in conjunction with fixed route bus service. Service requires advance reservations and can include qualifying provisions. Passengers share the ride with other passengers. Buses serve different locations and passengers each day dependent upon the locations requested by passengers.

### **Curb-to-Curb Service**

Buses arrive and depart from curbside. Under Department of Transportation (DOT) Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, the driver or bus attendant must assist individuals with disabilities with the use of ramps, lifts, and securement systems. If it is necessary for the personnel to leave their seats to provide this assistance, they must do so. In sum, Fort Bend Transportation personnel must ensure that a passenger with a disability is able to take advantage of the accessibility and safety features on vehicles. Drivers are instructed to use a curbside location that provides a safe environment for boarding and alighting. Said location may or may not be immediately adjacent to the requested pick-up location and/or scheduled pick-up location.

### **Door-to-Door Service**

Buses arrive and depart curbside or from designated parking areas. Drivers leave the vehicle to escort a passenger to or from a building doorway to the vehicle. Drivers are not authorized to cross the threshold of building doorways and/ or responsible for locking building doors. Drivers are authorized to open and close building doors as a courtesy and/or assist people with disabilities. Drivers are not responsible for signing any passenger in or out of any facility.

### **Hand-to-Hand Service**

Buses arrive and depart curbside or from designated parking areas. Drivers are authorized to leave the vehicle to escort a passenger to or from a building doorway as necessary to “hand” over, or receive, the passenger to/from a personal escort within the building. Drivers are not authorized to cross the threshold of building doorways and/or responsible for locking building doors. Drivers are authorized to open and close building doors as a courtesy and/or assist people with disabilities. Drivers are not responsible for signing any passenger in or out of any facility.

**SERVICE GUIDELINES AND SERVICE AREA**

1. Transportation services are available to all Fort Bend County residents and visitors.
2. Trip must originate in Fort Bend County.
3. For Demand/Response services, the service area is described as all locations within Fort Bend County and locations up to one (1) mile outside the boundaries of Fort Bend County.
4. Services to the Texas Medical Center and Veterans Hospital in Houston will be provided via transfer to the Fort Bend Commuter service into the Texas Medical Center. A transfer point to the service may be made at any of the Fort Bend County Park and Ride locations or at other transfer locations designated by Fort Bend County.
5. Transfers to Houston's Metro service, or to services provided by other public operators servicing areas adjacent to Fort Bend County, will also be provided by the Demand/Response and Commuter services. Transfer locations will be posted on the website, listed in published schedules, and/or negotiated with the service provider. As a general rule, park and ride facilities or other locations immediately adjacent to Fort Bend County or within Fort Bend County will be used.
6. Special event and charter services may be provided in other areas or from other locations.
7. Commuter, Point Deviation Routes, and Fixed Routes will have the service area defined in published schedules. Schedules will be available on the Fort Bend County website and/or in vehicles, facilities and other locations.
8. All residents and visitors of Fort Bend County are eligible for services offered by the Fort Bend County Public Transportation Department. In certain circumstances, statutes or funding sources may dictate passenger and scheduling limitations. This could include but not be limited to service type limits, service area limitations, scheduling limitations, rider limitations (all elderly, handicapped, etc.) and/or the service type limitations. When applicable, these restrictions will be posted on the County's website and/or in route schedules and other public documents.

## RESERVATIONS & SCHEDULING

### Demand/Response and Para-Transit Services

1. To schedule a ride call 281- 633-RIDE (7433).
2. Reservations **are** accepted by telephone Monday through Friday, excluding County Holidays, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.
3. Reservations are **not** accepted by voicemail, telephone message, text, facsimile, or electronic mail. Passengers must speak directly with a reservationist to schedule a ride. Accommodations will be made for those with special needs.
4. Passengers are required to furnish their contact information at the time a reservation is made and/or when their information has changed.
5. Reservations will be accepted from one (1) business day and up to thirty (30) calendar days in advance of the need for transportation.
6. Passengers may reserve a ride for themselves and other traveling companions. All passengers must be listed at the time the primary reservation is made.
7. Passengers may reserve a single ride, multiple rides, and multiple destinations for one day or multiple days.
8. Multiple rides, multiple destinations, or multiple day trips require additional reservation time to process the trips. Passengers requesting multiple days may be asked to call back at a later time to find out availability for the requested trips, and/or to get their scheduled pick-up times.
9. All reservations are subject to space and time availability.
10. Any special needs accommodations and/or requests must be disclosed at time of reservation. Special needs accommodations include requests for assistance to/from the door, use of a wheelchair, walker, cane, hearing or vision impairment accommodations, etc. Please make note of the following:
  - a. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Fort Bend County Public Transportation will allow up to two (2) Personal Care Assistants (PCA) to ride along with a passenger at no charge. Notification of assistants riding along with a passenger must be disclosed at the time the reservation is made.
  - b. Service animals are permitted to ride on board subject to the

Service Animal Policy.

- c. Individuals with hearing impairments can make a reservation utilizing the Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS). The individual would dial 711 which would connect him/her to TRS.
  - d. Individuals with vision impairments can request audio tapes of printed materials and/or printed materials be provided in larger fonts.
11. Reservation changes will not be accepted via voicemail, telephone message, text, facsimile or electronic mail. Passengers must speak directly with a reservationist to make any changes to scheduled rides. One attempt will be made to return voicemail and other message types; however, no changes will be made until direct contact is made with the passenger or their representative to confirm the change requested.
  12. "Will call" trips are not allowed. Fort Bend County Public Transportation does not offer same day service. Passengers must schedule both the initial pick-up time and return trip pick-up time at least one business day in advance of the need for a trip.
  13. For Demand/Response and Para-Transit services, trips are scheduled for drop-offs accommodating first appointment times no earlier than 8:00 a.m. and last pick-up times no later than 5:00 p.m.
  14. For Point Deviation services, scheduling for drop-off and pick-up times will be defined in related schedules.
  15. Reservation and scheduling personnel are not authorized to book/schedule trips that will violate on-time performance goals, ride time limitations, and/or service boundaries.
  16. Time needed to accommodate passengers with disabilities will be considered and allowed in all routes. Passengers should expect extended wait times to accommodate these needs when applicable. Special needs accommodations include assistance with packages, assistance with boarding and alighting vehicles, requests for assistance to/from the door of a building, use of a wheelchair, walker, cane and/or hearing or sight impairment.
  17. Passengers must schedule a return pick-up time when the initial reservation is made. "Will call/day-of" trips are not allowed.
  18. Drivers are not authorized to adjust schedules on the day of service.

19. Attempts will be made to schedule requests for pick-up or drop-off times no earlier than requested or set time or no later than requested or set time. All attempts will be made to accommodate the request both when the trip is scheduled and on the day of service; however, passengers are advised that “day of service” conditions can affect the ability to provide service.
20. Schedulers are not authorized to schedule trips so that only one passenger is on-board the vehicle for a trip. Trips are scheduled to ensure the maximum amount of passengers can be served. Passengers should expect to ride with other passengers. Scheduling will be done to ensure the maximum numbers of passengers are accommodated on each vehicle while meeting on-time performance and ride time expectations.

## **DISPATCHING**

Dispatchers are communication personnel responsible for providing drivers and passenger’s information throughout the day of service. One the day of service, Dispatchers provide passengers with an Estimated Time of Arrival (ETA) for a bus when requested. The ETA is calculated by the Fort Bend County Public Transportation’s scheduling program. The ETA changes as the route is performed and data is updated in the system throughout the day. Requests regarding an ETA before the day a ride is scheduled should be directed to Reservations staff.

## **SUBSCRIPTION RIDE**

### **Demand/Response Services**

A subscription ride is a service offered as a convenience to passengers. It enables the passenger to expect service for the trip without having to phone in reservations each time the trip is needed. Subscription riders are still required to phone in cancellations according to the cancellation policy defined in these guidelines. An eligible subscription trip is defined as a “set/fixed transportation trip (trip is at the same time, same place, same day(s)) on a continuing schedule.” The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) limits subscription rides in complementary para-transit services to no more than 50% of the trips available in any given service hour. Subscription trips will be allowed based on this limitation.

1. Subscriptions will be taken on a first come, first serve basis based upon availability in the requested service hour(s).
2. If there is no availability for a passenger’s subscription request, the subscription trip request will be put on a waiting list for the hour(s) in which the subscription ride is being requested.

3. Fort Bend County will maintain a waiting list for subscription service. Passengers can request either verbally or in writing information concerning their place number on the waiting list.
4. Trips on the subscription trip waiting list will be processed on a first come, first served basis when space opens in any given service hour(s).
5. Passengers will be allowed to request subscription rides for one-way trips and multiple leg trips.
6. When only one leg or only certain portions of a multiple trip subscription request is available for subscription rides, passengers will be allowed a subscription ride for only those portions of the trips requested that are available.
7. Any change to a subscription ride (time, location, day, etc.) will cancel the subscription and a new subscription will need to be requested. The subscription will be treated as a new request.
8. Subscriptions may be placed on hold for a period of no more than thirty (30) calendar days without cancellation. Requests to place a subscription trip on hold must be made prior to a passenger receiving a late cancel or no-show trip.
9. Passengers must notify the reservations office to place a subscription ride on hold. The reservationist will note in the caller's file the name of the person requesting the hold, the date of the request, the date(s) the subscription trip is not to be scheduled for service and the date the subscription trip is to resume.
10. Subscription trip requests will be denied if more than 50% of the total available trips in any given service hour are dedicated to subscription rides.
11. Subscription trips may be cancelled if the subscription rides in any given service hour exceed 50% of the available trips in the service hour.
12. Passengers receiving service suspensions will not be allowed the convenience of a subscription ride for the first twelve (12) months following a suspension.

## **ON-TIME PERFORMANCE**

Demand/Response trips are considered "on-time" if the vehicle arrives within the on-time window of thirty (30) minutes. A trip is considered on-time if the vehicle arrives fifteen (15) minutes before the scheduled pick-up time or fifteen (15)

minutes after the scheduled pick-up time.

Commuter Park and Ride, Point Deviation Routes and/or Fixed Route Service are considered “on-time” if the vehicle arrives at the scheduled pick-up time or within 5 (five) minutes after the scheduled time. Reverse commuters must be at their stop at least 5 minutes before the scheduled time to not risk missing their bus.

## **CANCELLATION POLICY**

Passengers must notify Fort Bend County Public Transportation of all cancellations. Passengers are encouraged to call in cancellations as far in advance as possible.

### **Late Cancel**

A “Late Cancel” occurs when the cancellation is received after 5:00 p.m. of the business day prior to the day of the scheduled trip or on the day of service.

### **Cancel-At-Door**

A “Cancel-At-Door” trip occurs when a vehicle arrives at a scheduled pick-up location within the on-time window and the passenger, or someone at the location on the rider’s behalf, communicates to the driver a refusal to board the bus.

### **No-Show**

A “No-Show” trip occurs when a vehicle arrives at a scheduled pick-up location within the on-time window, waits five (5) minutes, and the passenger is not there, or is there but refuses the trip

## **SUSPENSION POLICY**

A combined total of three (3) or more late cancellations, cancel-at-door, and/or no-show trips within a ninety (90) day period will result in a thirty (30) day suspension of service.

Passengers will not be immediately refused for non-payment of fares; however, service will be suspended for a minimum of 30 days upon three (3) non-payments of fares in a ninety (90) day period.

1. A notice will be sent to violators informing them of their suspension. The suspension notice will include a listing of the number of late cancellations, cancel-at-door, and/or no-show trips that occurred, and the dates of the pending suspension. See also Suspension Appeals Process included in these guidelines.

2. No more than two (2) suspensions per year are permitted.
3. A third suspension within a one year period will result in permanent suspension from service. The one year period begins with the date of the first suspension.

## SUSPENSION APPEALS

Passengers receiving a service suspension notice for violation of late cancellations, cancel-at-door, and/or no-show, safety, or fare policies, **are** allowed to appeal the decision. Passengers receiving a service suspension notice for violation of security policies **will not** be allowed to appeal the decision.

1. In order to request an appeal the passenger must submit a written request to the Public Transportation Administrative office postmarked within ten (10) days of the date of the suspension notice.
2. The Fort Bend County Public Transportation office will contact the passenger to schedule an appeal hearing. All attempts will be made to schedule the hearing within four to five (4-5) business days from the date the request for appeals was received by the Fort Bend County Public Transportation office. A written notice indicating the date, time and location of the hearing will be mailed to the address on record.
3. Passengers who choose to attend the appeal hearing should be prepared to provide a detailed description of why they believe the violation should be excused. Supporting documentation, if applicable, should be included.
4. Passengers who choose not to attend the appeal hearing must submit a written statement documenting a detailed description of why they believe the violations should be excused. Supporting documentation, if applicable, should be included. The written statement must be received at the Public Transportation Administrative office at least two (2) business days prior to the scheduled appeal hearing. Statements received less than two (2) business days prior to the appeal hearing will not be considered.
5. Appeals will be held at an accessible Fort Bend County facility. Appeals may be conducted over the phone if requested by the passenger in the appeal letter.
6. No suspension will take effect if the customer has filed an appeal in accordance with the instructions and deadlines noted in this policy, and/or the Appeals Panel has not determined the outcome of the appeal. All appeals will be heard by an Appeals Panel.

7. The Fort Bend County Public Transportation Office will advise customers in writing of its decision concerning their appeal within ten (10) days of the hearing. If the decision upholds the suspension, the notice of decision will provide customers with the beginning and end date of the suspension period. The decision of the Appeals Panel is final.

## **FARE POLICY**

All Fort Bend County Public Transportation Services **require** a passenger to pay a fare with cash, a pre-purchased ticket, vouchers, or as other fare media becomes available, debit cards, fare cards, etc. From time to time Fort Bend County may offer “free fare” services in order to promote the use of transportation services and/or as part of special event or charter services.

1. All passengers besides Personal Care Assistant (PCA) are required to pay a fare.
2. Children and infants will be assessed the same fare as adults.
3. Purchase of tickets and other fare media, including vouchers or fare cards by cash, check or credit card is non-refundable.
4. Exact change is required for cash fares. Drivers are not authorized to make change.
5. Tickets and/or cash must be put in fare box located at the front of the vehicle.
6. Passengers will not be immediately refused for non-payment of fares; however, service can be suspended for non-payment. See also Suspension Policy.
  - a. For the purposes of tracking non-payments, passengers refusing to provide their name and contact information, can be immediately denied service.
  - b. Drivers do not determine whether a passenger may board without a fare. The driver is required to have the dispatcher or operations supervisor approve the request for boarding without paying the appropriate fare.
7. Fort Bend County and/or its contracted service provider reserve the right to request police intervention should any type of altercation or disagreement occur regarding fare payments in/or around vehicles or county facilities.

8. Fort Bend County may take legal action against passengers who refuse to pay fares, are involved in altercations or incidents regarding fares, and/or who utilize fraudulent or counterfeit fare media.
9. Passenger employers and/or service providers are allowed to purchase tickets in bulk and distribute them to their employees or patrons. Businesses or agencies wishing to provide these services can contact the Fort Bend County Public Transportation Administrative office for further information.

Ticket books may be purchased:

1. In person at the Fort Bend County Public Transportation Administrative Office during regular business hours, excluding County Holidays.
2. By mail request which should be sent to the Fort Bend County Public Transportation Administrative Office. Payment must be included with the Order form. Order forms are located on our website.
3. At other locations in Fort Bend and Harris County. Currently, ticket books for Commuter and Demand Response services are available for purchase at the Kroger Store on Sweetwater Boulevard in Sugar Land.
4. From employers along the commuter routes who provide tickets for employees. Passengers are encouraged to ask their employers about these options.
5. Via internet ticket sales. Information and instructions are located on our website at [www.FBCTransit.org](http://www.FBCTransit.org).

Information regarding fares (including discounts, if applicable) is available on the County website at [www.FBCTransit.org](http://www.FBCTransit.org) and/or in brochures located on the vehicles, and select locations throughout the County. For more information call the Fort Bend County Public Transportation Department at 281-633-RIDE (7433).

## **AMBASSADOR SERVICES**

### **Demand Response Service**

As grant funding is made available, Ambassador Services may be provided by Fort Bend County. An Ambassador is an individual who works directly with passengers providing assistance from the passenger's door to the vehicle and from the vehicle to the final destination. This personalized service is to assist with the safe passage for those unable to travel unescorted or alone or for those who need additional help with boarding and alighting vehicles. Ambassadors may be assigned to bus stop locations and/or transit vehicles. Ambassadors will

not be drivers, will not attach passenger securements (seat belts, wheelchair tie down, etc.) or operate mechanical lifts or ramps. Their function is solely restricted to the duties stated below and assisting clients with agitation, behavioral and cognitive issues. Ambassador assistance will consist of the following:

1. "Gentle Support," such as opening doors and providing verbal guidance.
2. If needed, physical support such as assisting passengers with balance problems, climbing steps, handling packages or performing similar functions.
3. "Hand-to-Hand" service if requested at the time a reservation is made. Hand-to-Hand service encompasses the escort of a rider from one caregiver or representative to another caregiver or representative. The Ambassador is restricted to cross a threshold of a passenger's home.
4. Assistance at bus stops will be limited to ensuring passenger boards the correct vehicle and are advised not to wander into the street or unsafe locations while waiting for vehicle or transfer.

## **BIKE RACKS**

All Fort Bend Transit buses feature exterior bike racks attached to the front. Each bike rack can hold two bicycles with 20" wheels. Spaces are on a first come, first serve basis. There is no charge to use them.

### ***Safety Tips:***

1. Do not wait in the street with your bike as the bus approaches.
2. After unloading your bike, never cross in front of the bus. Wait until the bus has left the stop.
3. NEVER try to retrieve something that rolls under the bus.

## **BIKE RACK POLICY**

1. Bicyclists MUST notify the bus operator before loading or unloading the bicycle.
2. Bicyclists are responsible for securing and removing their bike to/from the bike rack.
3. The bus operator cannot assist with securing or removing the bike; however, they can provide verbal instructions.

4. Motor-powered bicycles, tandem bicycles, tricycles and bicycles with training wheels are NOT permitted.
5. Bicycles are NOT allowed on the bus.
6. Bicyclists under the age of 12 or under must be accompanied by an adult.
7. If bicyclists violate Fort Bend Transit policy, they may be asked to remove their bicycles from the bus.
8. Bicyclists must provide their own locks and assume responsibility for their bicycles.
9. Bicycles left on the bus or at a Fort Bend Transit facility for ten days or longer are considered “abandoned” and can be removed by Fort Bend Transit.
10. Any unclaimed personal property (i.e. bicycle) that was removed by Fort Bend Transit will be held for a period of two weeks (14 calendar days). At the expiration of two weeks, any unclaimed personal property will be deemed “abandoned” and turned over to the County Purchasing Agent for disposition.
11. Fort Bend Transit is not responsible for personal injury, property damage or property loss arising from the use of the bike racks. Fort Bend Transit assumes no responsibility, customers use the bus bike racks at their own risk.

## **SERVICE ANIMALS**

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), businesses and organizations that serve the public must allow people with disabilities to bring their service animals into all areas of the facility where customers are normally allowed to go. Service animals and service animals in training are also permitted to ride on board Fort Bend County Public Transportation vehicles. Service animals are animals individually trained to perform tasks for people with disabilities including assisting people who have visual or auditory impairments, assisting with wheelchairs, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, or performing other special tasks.

1. Employees may ask if an animal is a service animal, but cannot require special ID cards for the animal, or ask about the person’s disability.
2. Passengers who use service animals will not be charged extra fees, isolated from other patrons, or treated less favorably than other patrons.

3. A passenger who uses a service animal will not be asked to remove his/her service animal from the premises unless:
  - a. The animal is out of control and the animal's owner does not take effective action to control it.
  - b. The animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others.

## **SAFETY POLICY**

The safety of passengers, employees and contractors is a primary concern for our Department. The Department's policy is to promote active participation from employees, contractors and passenger's to prevent accidents, injuries or incidents from occurring. Employees, contractors and passengers are encouraged to report safety concerns. Fort Bend County and/or its contracted service provider(s) will contact appropriate law enforcement or medical services to respond to safety incidents where and when it is deemed necessary by Fort Bend County and/or its contracted service provider(s).

1. No smoking or alcohol consumption is permitted on-board vehicles or in transit facilities.
2. Consumption of non-alcoholic beverages is allowed on-board vehicles provided that drinks are in covered non-spill containers, kept out of the aisle and seats and containers are removed from the vehicle when the passenger exits the vehicle.
3. Consumption of small snacks such as candy, chips, fruit, sandwiches, etc. is allowed on-board vehicles provided that the snacks are kept out of the aisle and seats and any trash is removed from the vehicle when the passenger exits the vehicle.
4. In order to ensure the safety of all passengers, passenger are required to immediately notify the driver if a beverage or food is spilled or if any trash or personal items are dropped or not secured inside the vehicle. Passengers should not move from their seats while the vehicle is in motion to clean-up a spill or to secure loose objects. Upon notification of a hazard, the driver will notify dispatch of the need to stop the vehicle. The driver will locate a safe location to stop the vehicle. The route will resume as soon as the spill is cleaned and/or the items are secured.
5. Fort Bend County and/or its contracted service provider(s) reserve the right to request medical attention and/or emergency medical services for passenger's on-board vehicles or in transit facilities.
6. All passengers must wear seat restraints including shoulder harness when available.

7. Medical equipment and supplies such as oxygen bottles, syringes, etc. will only be allowed on vehicles if they are prescribed by a physician and are properly secured or stowed while the vehicle is in motion.
8. Fort Bend County's Public Transportation service is not equipped to accommodate passengers needing specialized medical attention, monitoring equipment or procedures while traveling. Requests for these types of services will be referred to private providers of medical transportation services.
9. All Fort Bend County employees are instructed to follow universal precautions to reduce the likelihood of exposure and spread of disease. Employees may use disposable latex gloves, disinfectants, and/or hand sanitizers and/or have them available for use by passengers.
10. Passengers twelve (12) years or under must be accompanied by a guardian or parent at least eighteen (18) years of age or older.
11. Passengers must provide approved seat restraints for children forty (40) pounds or less.
12. No standing or sitting in the aisle is permissible while the vehicle is in motion.
13. Passengers visiting transit facilities, waiting at bus stops, riding vehicles, etc. must be properly clothed in clothing that covers the body and wear shoes. Individuals not properly clothed will not be allowed to enter transit facilities or board vehicles and/or to remain in or around Fort Bend County properties.
14. Passengers are to refrain from speaking to the driver while the vehicle is in motion unless it is an emergency.
15. Passengers shall follow the driver's instructions.
16. All wheelchairs must have their wheels locked and must be properly secured while on the vehicle.
17. If a seat or wheelchair tie-down location has a seat belt that is not working or missing the seat or tie-down location cannot be used for seating passengers or securing passengers in wheelchairs.
18. Drivers are authorized to maneuver a wheelchair up or down a single-step curb.

19. Drivers are authorized to maneuver a wheelchair up or down one single stair step. Drivers are not authorized to maneuver wheelchairs up or down multiple steps.
20. Drivers are authorized to provide necessary assistance in boarding and alighting vehicles. Assistance includes opening and closing the vehicle doors, hand support on the vehicle stairwell or lift, assistance with packages meeting the package restrictions contained in these guidelines, and assistance securing seatbelts. Drivers shall secure all wheelchairs tie downs for passengers utilizing wheelchairs. Drivers may also provide assistance securing lap and shoulder belts for passengers utilizing wheelchairs.
21. Walkers, canes and other mobility devices are allowed on vehicles. Mobility devices must be secured from movement while on the vehicle and must not block the aisles and walkways.
22. Bags (handbags, shopping bags, briefcases, backpacks, suitcases, etc.), umbrellas and other carry-on items are allowed on vehicles subject to the guidelines provided herein. All items brought on-board vehicles shall be secured from movement while on the vehicle and must not block the aisles and walkways or take up seating space. Items shall not be left unattended or block entrances, exits, or passageways at stops or in facilities. Passengers will only be allowed to board vehicles with the number of carry-on items they can effectively handle independently.
23. Shopping bags, similar to those provided in grocery stores, are limited to no more than six (6) bags per passenger with each bag weighing less than ten (10) pounds. Larger shopping bags are limited to no more than two (2) per passenger weighing less than thirty (30) pounds. Briefcases and backpacks are limited to one (1) weighing no more than 30 pounds and must be secured from movement while on the vehicle and must not block aisles and walkways.
24. Suitcases are limited to two (2) small suitcases weighing no more than thirty (30) pounds each and meeting the size limitations imposed by air carriers for carry-on luggage. Suitcases exceeding the quantity allowed and/ or the weight and size requirements are not allowed on vehicles. Suitcases must be secured from movement while on the vehicle and must not block aisles and walkways.
25. Individuals who are unable to travel independently, safely and securely, on their own accord, whether due to physical or cognitive disabilities, and regardless of age, must be accompanied by an assistant.
26. Passengers will not be allowed to stand in the aisles, sit or stand in the

- stairwells, nor have more passengers in a seat than the seat is designed to accommodate. Drivers do not make determinations regarding accommodation of standing passengers and should not be asked to violate capacity standards. In certain situations (emergencies, evacuations, hazardous conditions, etc.), the dispatcher and/or operations supervisor may instruct the driver to allow passengers to stand or sit in other locations in the bus to facilitate the situation.
27. No person shall spit in or upon any bus, transit facility, passenger, or transit employee.
  28. Profanity, abusive, or other disruptive behavior onboard vehicles, within County facilities, or verbally expressed to an employee or passenger, is not allowed and may result in immediate suspension of service and/ or removal from the vehicle/facility. Such behavior is considered disorderly conduct and could result in additional legal action.
  29. Aggressive behaviors or inappropriate physical contact or displays of body parts by a passenger to the driver and/or passengers at any time will result in immediate removal from the vehicle/facility and potentially permanent suspension from transportation services.
  30. Any unreasonably loud, disturbing or unnecessary noise that causes material distress, discomfort, or injury to passengers and/or drivers is not allowed. This includes playing any radio, radio device, phonograph, musical instrument, portable stereo, etc. at volumes that can be heard by other passengers and/or the driver. The use of portable speakers is not allowed by passengers.

## SECURITY

As with other segments of the transportation industry, Fort Bend County Public Transportation has developed practices designed to prevent security incidents. Employees, contractors and passengers are encouraged to increase their awareness of security concerns and to immediately report **ANY** concern to Department Staff or law enforcement officials. Matters of security are taken **seriously**, and **violations** of the security policy will result in service suspension and/or prosecution. Fort Bend County and/or its contracted service provider(s) will contact appropriate law enforcement or medical services to respond to security incidents where and when it is deemed necessary by Fort Bend County and/or its contracted service provider(s). The Department has developed the following policies to help ensure the safety of our passengers, employees and contractors.

1. Firearms are strictly prohibited unless specifically authorized by law.

2. Alcohol is strictly prohibited on-board vehicles and/or in or on County facilities in accordance with all local, state, and Federal laws.
3. Threatening language or other disruptive behavior onboard vehicles, within County facilities, or verbally expressed to an employee or passenger, is not allowed and may result in immediate suspension of service and/or removal from the vehicle/facility. Such behavior is considered disorderly conduct and could result in additional legal action.
4. Any passenger who poses a threat to himself/herself, the driver, or any other passenger will be removed from the vehicle and county facilities.
5. No person shall deliberately obstruct the entrance or exit aisle of a bus or any portion of a transit facility regardless of the means of creating the obstruction, and regardless of whether the obstruction arises from the person's acts alone or in concert with the acts of others. Obstruct means to render impassable, or to render passage unreasonable, inconvenient, or hazardous.
6. Fort Bend County Public Transportation and/or its contracted service provider(s) will request law enforcement or medical officials remove individuals from vehicles or facilities who are violating laws, presenting a danger to themselves or other passengers, who are disrupting services and/ or who have physical or mental symptoms requiring medical attention.
7. Passengers, who observe any suspicious behavior by individuals or groups, notice unattended or suspicious looking bags, packages or substances on board vehicles or at county facilities, should immediately report the observance to Fort Bend County staff and appropriate law enforcement agencies.
8. All threats of bodily or physical harm to Fort Bend County employees, agents, passengers or threats regarding destruction of facilities, equipment, or vehicles, are taken seriously and will not be considered a joke. Individuals posing such threats will be immediately removed from facilities and subject to the legal consequences of such actions.
9. No person shall draw, write, paint, mark upon, or deface any bus or portion of a transit facility.
10. The transit facilities of Fort Bend County are designated for the sole and exclusive use of passengers of the transit system. Seats, benches, parking lots, and other areas are provided as passenger waiting areas, and no person shall sleep in these or any portion of a transit facility.

11. Loitering is not allowed in or around any Fort Bend County Public Transportation Facility or on-board vehicles. Any individual(s) seen in office areas, parking premises, bus stop areas, and/or on-board or around vehicles and equipment are subject to being stopped and questioned regarding their reasons for being in or around the facility. If the individual(s) have business reasons for being in or around Fort Bend County Public Transportation Equipment and Facilities, they will be escorted to the proper person or facility and asked to complete their business as expeditiously as possible. If no legitimate business reason is noted, the individual(s) will be escorted off Fort Bend County properties. If the individual(s) become threatening in any way, law enforcement officers will be called to the scene and asked to remove the individual(s) from Fort Bend County Properties.
12. Disturbing, threatening, or prank telephone calls will be reported to law enforcement organizations for appropriate handling and follow up.
13. Passengers on-board vehicles and/or in or around facilities during threatening events must follow directions given by Fort Bend County staff and/or law enforcement officials. This includes following instructions for evacuating vehicles and facilities and/or sheltering in place.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS & CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

Fort Bend County Commissioners have established a means of providing the public with an opportunity to express opinions and concerns regarding a major service change or fare increase. Refer to the PPP for details.

All Fort Bend County employees and contractor are expected to treat the public and passengers courteously. Employees and contracted staff are expected to be responsive to concerns and to use tact and diplomacy while interacting with customers. Customers are encouraged to report any instance where they feel an employee or contractor has failed to meet this policy.

## **COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS**

The following defines the procedures for filing compliments or complaints regarding Fort Bend County Public Transportation Services.

1. Any Fort Bend County Public Transportation staff member can accept compliments or complaints regarding services, contractor(s), employees, facilities, equipment, etc.
2. Compliments or complaints can be made via telephone, in person or in writing.
3. A record of compliments and complaints received will be maintained by a

FBCPT employee.

4. All compliments or complaints will be referred to the Operations Manager for processing.
5. Processing of compliments or complaints received in writing, by telephone or in person will begin no later than the following business day after the compliment/complaint is received.
6. Compliments or complaints shall be addressed within thirty (30) business days of receipt by Fort Bend County Public Transportation.

## SHARED RIDE and COMMUTER SERVICE

Fort Bend County Public Transportation offers “Shared Ride” services only. Shared ride service is a transit service that picks up several passengers at different pick up locations before taking them to their respective destinations. The passenger’s trip can be shared among other passengers.

Commuter, point deviation routes, and fixed routes are assigned vehicles with capacity considerations determined by pre-planning activities and/or actual boarding’s. Where and when possible, additional vehicles and/or vehicles with additional seating capacity will be assigned based on fleet availability and budgetary considerations.

Under Department of Transportation (DOT) Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) fixed route stop announcements by a transit provider must be announced (by personnel or a recording system) at least at transfer points with other fixed routes, other major intersections and destination points, and intervals along a route sufficient to permit individuals with visual impairments or other disabilities to be oriented to their location. Further, the transit personnel must announce any stop upon request of an individual with a disability.

It is Fort Bend County Public Transportation’s policy to require all commuter passengers to board at the designated pick up/drop off locations. This policy exists because of a number of safety concerns including: passengers chasing buses, running across parking lot/parking aisles and through-ways, running in front of/behind or alongside buses while they are stationary and in motion, and waiting in areas where there is no sidewalk or medium.

Drivers are to hold at a stop until the scheduled departure time. The drivers are to leave the stop at the scheduled departure time once all passengers have boarded or alighted. Morning commuter route will be allowed to perform drop off stops up to five minutes before the scheduled time and continue their route onto the next stop location. Reverse commuters must be at their stop at least five

minutes before the scheduled time to not risk missing their bus. The same will apply for after noon reverse commuters boarding at the Fort Bend County park and ride lots.

Vehicle Operating Standards dictate vehicles will not be operated without working heating and air conditioning systems (HVAC) and/or working safety features (windshield wipers, turn signals, etc.). If a HVAC or safety system failure occurs while the vehicle is in service, passengers will be required to transfer to another vehicle when another vehicle is made available at a transfer location designated by the dispatcher.

On-board time (ride time) is scheduled to be no longer than one and a half hours (1.5) per passenger. Destination travel time can and will be considered when scheduling trips. Exceptions to ride time limitations must be approved by the operations supervisor or his/her designee.

Passengers presenting themselves for boarding without a prior reservation may be turned away. Drivers do not make a determination on additional, unscheduled passenger boarding. Drivers are required to contact dispatch for instruction.

Add-on trips and/or additional passengers will not be accepted if they violate customer satisfaction policies. Emergency conditions, vehicle accidents, incidents, and/or failures, as well as traffic and weather conditions, may require deviation from customer service policies.

Drivers must follow designated schedules and routes. Drivers are not allowed to change the order of pick-up and drop-offs nor are they allowed to change the route taken by the vehicle without prior approval from the dispatcher or operations supervisor.

**The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) prohibits discrimination and ensures equal opportunity and access for persons with disabilities.**

**Fort Bend County is committed to ensure nondiscriminatory transportation in support of our mission to provide high quality transit services for all Americans. If you believe you have been subjected to discrimination you may file a complaint with the Fort Bend County Title VI Coordinator.**

**Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in programs & activities receiving federal financial assistance (42 U.S.C. Section 2000d).**

**Fort Bend County is committed to taking affirmative action to assure that no person shall be excluded with regard to the routing, scheduling, or quality of service of transportation service on the grounds of race, color, or national origin.**

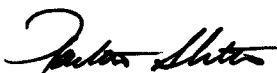
If you believe you have been subjected to discrimination you may file a complaint with the Fort Bend County Title VI Coordinator.

Fort Bend County Public Transportation Department  
ATTN: Title VI Coordinator  
12550 Emily Court Ste. 400  
Sugar Land, TX 77478

Or via email at: [transit@fortbendcountytexas.gov](mailto:transit@fortbendcountytexas.gov)

Complaints may also be filed with the following organization no later than 180 days after the date of the alleged discrimination:

Federal Transit Administration's Office of Civil Rights  
ATTN: Title VI Program Coordinator  
East Building, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor – TCR  
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE  
Washington, DC 20590



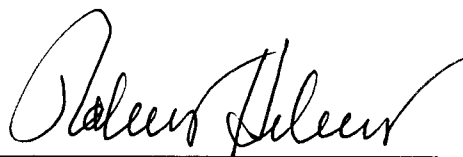
Signature

**Paulette Shelton**

Public Transit Director

*7-7-16*

Date



Signature

**Robert E. Hebert**

Fort Bend County Judge

*July 12, 2016*

Date

Attest:



Laura Richard  
Fort Bend County Clerk

